

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 17, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey and Ranking Member Granger,

We write to ask that you include \$515 million in relief funding for State Historic Preservation Officers (“SHPOs”), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (“THPOs”), and small museums in future Coronavirus response legislation to ensure each has the capacity to fulfill the major role they play in our communities and our national economic recovery. These critical organizations are integral to America’s economic well-being and are uniquely positioned to assist in national efforts to recover from the devastating financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Historic preservation projects provide multiple layers of economic stimulus, creating near term jobs and spending for important projects while also creating long-term economic benefits as a result of heritage tourism. Additionally, SHPOs and THPOs play an integral role in the federal government’s compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, with the vast majority of projects to revitalize and restore our nation’s infrastructure not being permitted without their work.

Throughout the United States, small museums are vital cultural and economic contributors. One study by Oxford Economics and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation found that museums overall support 726,000 jobs in the United States and directly employ over 372,000 people.¹ The study demonstrated that for every \$100 of economic activity generated by museums, an additional \$220 is created in other sectors of the US economy as a result of supply chain and employee expenditure impacts. These impacts mean that museums contribute approximately \$50 billion to the US economy each year.

Despite these critical economic benefits, America’s SHPOs, THPOs, and small museums are currently being incapacitated as a result of devastated state budgets. Many have been disproportionately impacted because the majority of their revenue is tied to industries, such as gaming, which remain shuttered as a result of the novel Coronavirus pandemic.

We therefore request that you include \$515 million in relief funding for SHPOs, THPOs, and

¹ [*Museums as Economic Engines*](#)

small museums in future Coronavirus Pandemic supplemental appropriations measures, including for the following uses:

- \$150 million to be made available to SHPOs and THPOs for eligible activities and costs necessary to maintain and optimize operations;
- \$75 million in supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (“HPF”) money for Paul Bruhn Grants which foster economic development in rural communities by providing funding for architectural and engineering services and physical building preservation;
- \$75 million in supplemental HPF money directed to Certified Local Governments for physical structures, surveys, education, and planning;
- \$75 million of direct non-matching funding to be awarded through SHPOs which would provide funding for physical structures, surveys, education, and planning;
- \$70 million to support small museums – or museums with annual operating budgets of less than \$750,000 – for eligible activities and costs necessary to maintain and optimize operations, with grants capped at \$250,000 per museum;
- \$50 million for digitization of documents in a manner that would enhance and expand the ability of SHPOs to work remotely during the ongoing pandemic or similar future events;
- And \$20 million for digitization of documents in a manner that would enhance and expand the ability of THPOs to work remotely during the ongoing pandemic or similar future events.

It is vital that SHPOs, THPOs, and small museums receive this economic relief to support the execution of their important undertakings, each of which are vital to the economic recovery and overall wellbeing of communities throughout America.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We appreciate your continued leadership during these difficult times and look forward to working with you on this matter.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress